

Independence

Independence National Historical Park
Pennsylvania

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Liberty Bell cracked long ago, but as an icon of freedom its voice has never been stilled. To Americans who demanded independence on this site, and to those who even now seek self-determination, it still declares “Proclaim Liberty throughout All the land unto All the Inhabitants Thereof.” Its crack is a reminder that liberty is imperfect, hopefully evolving to include those who have been denied full participation in a democratic society.

The bell was first heard in 1753 atop the Pennsylvania State House in Philadelphia. Its inscription was prophetic, for it was in this city that colonial representatives took some of the earliest steps toward independence from Great Britain. In response to Parliament’s punitive Intolerable Acts, the First Continental Congress gathered in September 1774 in Carpenters’ Hall, where it drew up a Declaration of Rights and Grievances and an appeal to King George III. No concessions were forthcoming, so the Second Continental Congress convened in the State House in May 1775. By this time the first shots had been fired at Lexington and Concord. Delegates who had been managing an economic battle over trade and taxes now had to direct a war.

Independence, however, was not yet the goal. Many colonists remained loyal to Britain, and some, though anxious to throw off Parliament’s yoke, still wished to keep the stability and security that came with being citizens of the British empire. George III, unmoved by Congress’ Olive Branch Petition affirming the colonies’ loyalty to the crown, declared them to be in a state of rebellion. In June 1776 Virginia delegate Richard Henry Lee moved that the colonies be proclaimed “Free and Independent States.” Thomas Jefferson drafted the formal declaration, appealing to natural principles of justice and equality. The delegates adopted the Declaration in Independence Hall on July 4; what had been colonies were now sovereign states on the road to becoming one nation.

“A More Perfect Union”

With the bold phrases of the Declaration of Independence still echoing through the land, the Continental Congress had to translate an assertion of freedom into a working reality. In November 1777 it produced the Articles of Confederation, which, rather than providing for real union, were in James Madison’s words “a treaty of alliance between independent and Sovereign States.” Individual states were jealous of their sovereignty, allowing the central government few real powers other than to direct the war. Yet it was the first halting step toward a stable federalism, in which power was shared by a central government and local states.

The Articles served the new nation during the war, but their obvious inadequacies, and popular movements de-



John Hancock
Th Jefferson
Ben Franklin
John Adams
Chas. Sumner
Richard Henry Lee

manding debt relief, spurred widespread sentiment for reform. Fifty-five delegates were sent to Philadelphia in 1787 to revise the Articles for “the preservation of the Union.” Soon after convening, however, the delegates agreed to create an entirely new constitutional government.

The Great Compromise, calling for a House of Representatives with proportional representation and a Senate with each state represented equally, ensured that small states and varied sectional interests would all have a voice. The states retained some attributes of sovereignty, but the central government had stronger powers, now with executive and judicial branches. Though the Constitution was not perfect—it failed to adequately address slavery—it provided a firm yet flexible structure around which to build a nation.



Richard Henry Lee (*far left*) formally proposed that the colonies declare independence. Thomas Jefferson (*second from left*) drafted the document, and John Adams (*second from right*) worked tirelessly for its approval. Benjamin Franklin (*right*), Adams, and Congress revised the draft, but the Declaration’s enduring words we owe to Jefferson.

John Trumbull’s painting shows the presentation of the Declaration to John Hancock, President of the Second Continental Congress.

The sunrise detail on the president’s chair appears over Hancock’s signature (*far left*).

LIBERTY BELL © TOP GUNS CORP. PHOTOGRAPHY; PAINTING OF INDEPENDENCE HALL / NPS LYNN GALLAGHER; FRANKLIN PORTRAIT / NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY; ALL IMAGES NOT OTHERWISE CREDITED / NPS COLLECTION

The Road To Nationhood

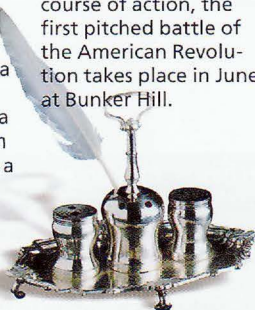
1774

Parliament punishes Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party by passing the Intolerable Acts; Boston Harbor is closed to commerce. Other colonies rally to Massachusetts’ cause. In May 1774 the Virginia Assembly calls for a meeting in Philadelphia of representatives from all the colonies to plan a response—the First Continental Congress.

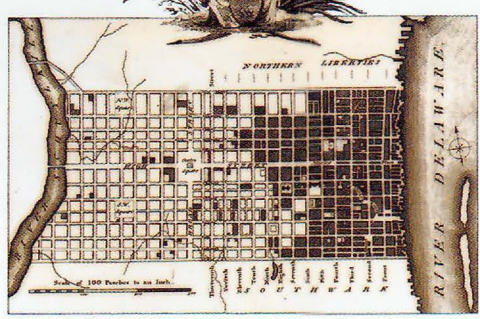
1775

Armed conflict begins in Massachusetts at Lexington and Concord in

April; the Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia in May, appointing George Washington as commander in chief of the Continental forces. As Congress debates its course of action, the first pitched battle of the American Revolution takes place in June at Bunker Hill.



Syng inkstand used for the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



Philadelphia in 1800.

1776

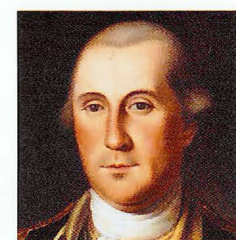
Thomas Paine publishes *Common Sense* in January, galvanizing the colonists. Delegates to Congress sever ties to Great Britain and sign

the Declaration of Independence creating 13 sovereign states. Benjamin Franklin is dispatched to France as one of America’s first ambassadors.

1777

British Gen. William Howe occupies Philadelphia in September and remains until June 1778. The British troops take food from citizens and strip furnishings from the city’s structures.

Hundreds of American prisoners of war, succumbing to wounds and disease, are buried in Washington Square. After almost a year of debate, Congress adopts the Articles of Confederation in November.



Gen. George Washington.

1778

France and America form an alliance, negotiated by Benjamin Franklin, obligating France to fight for American independence. Within four months, France and Great Britain are at war.

1781

Congress appoints Robert Morris, Philadelphia merchant and banker, as Superintendent of Finance to address the government’s rising debt and the nation’s rapidly growing infla-

tion. Morris is the force behind the creation of the Bank of North America. His brilliant financial strategies help finance the victory at Yorktown. The Articles of Confederation go into effect as the last state ratifies them in March.

1783

Britain and the United States sign the Treaty of Paris, ending the war. Articles include cessation of hostilities, recognition of U.S. independence, and the withdrawal of British land and naval forces.



Second Street and Christ Church, 1800, by William Birch.

1789

The first Federal Congress convenes in New York. Ten amendments to the Constitution—the Bill of Rights—are ratified by the states in 1791.

1790

Philadelphia becomes the nation’s temporary capital while the permanent site is prepared on the Potomac River.

1800

U.S. government moves to Washington, D.C.



Political cartoon urging unity.

1786

The spectacle of a central government helpless to help Massachusetts during Shay’s Rebellion (debt-ridden farmers seeking state relief) is a major reason for the convention in Philadelphia in 1787.

1787

A convention is called to reform the Confederation, which has no executive or judicial branches and no control over taxation. Delegates begin framing a new constitution in May and sign it in September. During

the state ratification process, pro-constitutional essays published in the New York press, called the “Federalist Papers,” have a marked influence on the debates. The last state required ratifies the Constitution in June 1788.

W

Americans began their quest for freedom and independence. Here, too, the United States was born and its ideals enacted in the Constitution. We invite you to make the most of your tour of this great historic place, and we wish you a rewarding visit. Begin at the Independence Visitor Center.

To painter Gilbert Stuart, early Philadelphia was the “Athens of America.” With amazing speed it had grown from William Penn’s “green countrie towne” of the 1600s to a thriving river port and the largest city of British North America. It was the most sophisticated of the colonial cities—the acknowledged cultural, financial, and political capital. Quakers and other English settlers, Scotch-Irish, Germans,

immigrants from other American colonies, those fleeing slavery, and free people of African descent formed a diverse community known for its tolerance and for the opportunities awaiting industrious artisans and young apprentices. The tight economic network of merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers formed the core of Philadelphia's revolutionary generation.

Independence Visitor Center, 525 Market Street, has an underground parking garage; enter on 6th Street between Arch and Market streets.

- *Eastbound* via I-76 and I-676; exit from I-76 to I-676 (left exit); continue to 6th Street exit (Independence Hall); turn right on 6th Street. Entrance to garage is on the left beyond Arch Street.
- *Westbound* via Benjamin

Franklin Bridge (US 30); follow signs for 6th Street, "Historic Area"; go to garage as above.

- *Southbound* via I-95; take exit 22 to Callowhill Street; turn right on Callowhill Street to 6th Street; turn left on 6th Street; proceed to garage as above.
- *Northbound* via I-95; take exit 22, I-676/Independence Hall (left exit); keep right for I-676 east/Independence Hall to

Callowhill Street; go straight on Callowhill Street to 6th Street. Turn left on 6th Street; go to garage as above.

Safety First Be careful crossing busy streets. Watch your step on uneven surfaces. Guard your valuables and lock your car. Emergencies: call 911.

	Park building open to public		Park building open by tour only; sign up at visitor center
	Park building not open to public		Restrooms

FRANKLIN
SQUARE

↑ To Edgar Allan Poe
National Historic Site
7th and Spring Garden St

The Liberty Bell is an international symbol of freedom. Hung in the State House in 1753, it summoned the Pennsylvania Assembly to work. In the 1830s anti-slavery groups named it the Liberty Bell. The bell cracked about 1846, but its message still rings out.



George Washington and John Adams created the office of president while living and working at this site. Washington's large staff included at least nine enslaved Africans. Adams never owned slaves.

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson, a delegate to the Continental Congress, rented two rooms on the second floor. He drafted the Declaration of Independence here. The house was rebuilt in 1975.

Delegates meeting in the Assembly Room of the Pennsylvania State House, now called Independence Hall, created the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Old City Hall housed the US Supreme Court from 1791 to 1800. The US Congress met in Congress Hall from 1790 to 1800.

Portraits of George and Martha Washington, Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant, Dolley Madison, John Paul Jones, and others bring the revolutionary period to life.

WASHINGTON
Tomb of the
Unknown Soldier
of the American
Revolution
SQUARE

Lawyer John Todd and Dolley Payne Todd lived here from 1791 to 1793, when John died of yellow fever. Dolley later married future president James Madison. The house shows middle-class life in Philadelphia's 1700s.

Benjamin Franklin owned a large house in the courtyard behind five houses on Market Street. Today the courtyard holds a "ghost house" and museum (currently under renovation). Townhouse exhibits include a 1700s print shop, a post office, and an archeological exhibit.

Henry Knox, the first Secretary of War, had offices in a building built here by the Carpenters' Company in 1791. This reconstruction has a museum devoted to the early history of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Independence
National Historical Park
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Philadelphia, PA 19106
www.nps.gov/inde

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Printed on recycled paper.

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2nd Street
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Christ Church

Using Your Time at the Park

Hours and Admission To see Independence Hall you need a timed ticket (free), available at Independence Visitor Center the morning of your visit. You may reserve tickets in advance at www.recreation.gov for a small fee. Before visiting the Liberty Bell or Independence Hall you must go through a security check. You may visit most other buildings without tickets or reservations. For more information visit www.nps.gov/inde.

Where to Start Begin at the Independence Visitor Center for information, exhibits, and tour tickets. Be sure to see the film *Independence*. Staff can answer questions and help you plan your visit. Ask about seasonal programs, special activities for children, and services for non-English-speaking visitors.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to the visitor center, ask a ranger, or visit www.nps.gov/inde.

Only a Short Time? See Independence Hall (a World Heritage site) and Liberty Bell Center.

Have More Time? Here are some ideas on what to see:

Independence Visitor Center
Liberty Bell Center
President's House Site
Independence Hall
Great Essentials exhibit
Congress Hall
Franklin Court
Carpenters' Hall
National Constitution Center

Independence Visitor Center
Liberty Bell Center
President's House Site
Independence Hall
Great Essentials exhibit
Congress Hall
Old City Hall
Declaration House
Portrait Gallery in the Second
Bank of the United States
Franklin Court
Carpenters' Hall
New Hall Military Museum
National Constitution Center
Free Quaker Meeting House
APS Museum
Bishop White House
Todd House
City Tavern
Thaddeus Kosciuszko
National Memorial
Edgar Allan Poe
National Historic Site
Germantown White House

PENN'S
LANDING

To get to Penn's Landing, walk above Interstate 95 on pedestrian bridges leading from Market, Chestnut, and Walnut streets to the waterfront.

This social, cultural, and political center—the “most genteel” tavern in America—was the site of business transactions, patriot gatherings, and musical performances. Today’s restaurant is a faithful reconstruction.

William White was a bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church formed after the American Revolution. His home, decorated in Federal style, typifies Philadelphia's elite. Guests included President George Washington.

Alexander Hamilton was the force behind the creation of the First Bank of the United States in 1791 to regulate a national monetary system. The building, completed in 1797, is an example of neoclassical architecture.

William Strickland's 1834 Greek Revival style shows bold form. It was the hub of commercial and financial activities. It is the oldest stock exchange building in the U.S. *Lobby open to the public.*

To Gloria Dei (Old Swedes')
Church National Historic Site